MEETING MINUTES

ECONOMIC INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

DATE	19.07.2023	TIME	11:00-13:00	PLACE	Online Meeting

PARTICIPANTS	
Participants	UNHCR; IRC; Dialog Foundation; Diaconia Poland, New Story Foundation; Magda Cienciala - SPI, ELIL, Spanish Red Cross; CORE; German Red Cross; MEAL; IOM Poland; Habitat for Humanity; Oxfam; Action Against Hunge;, MFC; Ukrainian women; Fundacja Innowacja i Wiedza; CIC Katowice; ADRA Polska; IOCC Poland; Central Roma Council in Poland; Towards Dialogue Foundation; Fundacja dla Migrantów Dobry Start (Foundation for Migrants Good Start); Ukrainian House; Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej (Association for Legal Intervention); Save the Children; Labor Office Warsaw
Chairs	UNHCR (Diogo Salema Da Costa Cabral Senior Livelihood and Economic Inclusion Officer cabrald@unhcr.org), IRC Joanna Surwillo, Private Sector and Livelihoods Manager, Joanna.surwillo@rescue.org)
Presenters	Mrs. Anna Mikulska, Researcher annamikulska96@gmail.com Dr hab. Pawel Kaczmarczyk, Professor at the Faculty of Economic Science of the University of Warsaw, and the director of the Center for Migration Research of the University of Warsaw p.kaczmarczyk@uw.edu.pl

AGENDA

1. Introductions by UNHCR and IRC.
2. Briefing of the UNHCR Call for Expression of Interest
3. Report presentation *Housing situation of Ukrainian refugees in Poland*, by researcher Mrs. Anna Mikulska.
4. Report presentation *Polish School of Support - Reception of refugees from Ukraine in Poland in 2022*, by a professor at the Faculty of Economic Science of the University of Warsaw and the director of the Center for Migration Research of the University of Warsaw Dr hab. Pawel Kaczmarczyk.
5. From Collective Shelters to Self-reliance. Discussion.
6. Closing.

Overview of the meeting

1. Introduction by Diogo and Joanna, and presentation of the agenda for today's meeting.

2. Presentation of the report *Housing situation of Ukrainian refugees in Pola*nd by Anna Mikulska:

- The reluctance to rent to Ukrainians is often due to a lack of knowledge of the law and the misinformation circulating among Poles that a tenant cannot be evicted, even if they do not pay, in the event that they are a refugee from Ukraine It is true, however, that eviction is a lengthy and judicial process and some landlords are afraid to rent to what they believe are insecure potential tenants.
- Anna has identified in her report the three most vulnerable groups who tend to have the most trouble finding accommodation:
  - Single mothers with children;
  - Elderly and people with disabilities - Lack of places for them in social welfare homes; problem with recognition of disability certificate or problem of issuing a new disability certificate;
  - Roma community - blatant discrimination and double standards in collective accommodation centers
- During the presentation Anna Mikulska presented the governmental solution addressing the housing problem for Ukrainian refugees:
  - Collective shelters and the participation fees that Ukrainian refugees have to pay a fee in they are not in exempted group defined in the legal act from march 2023,
  - Private host homes and the 40 plus program (Anna stated that other forms of support should also be available, e.g. psychological, legal)
  - Mutually Needed integration and support programme for refugees from Ukraine – finances NGO projects, however, the programme encountered some difficulties and was not launched in January 2023, but in May 2023.
- There has been no data on the homelessness crisis in Poland since the start of the pandemic, and yet it is likely that the introduction of a fee in collective shelters will lead the most vulnerable refugees into a homelessness crisis.

3. In the second prat of the meeting, Professor Pawel Kaczmarczyk presented the findings of *Polish School of Support - Reception of refugees from Ukraine in Poland in 2022* report with the focus on the economic inclusion of Ukrainian refugees.
   - Ukrainian War refugees and Polish labor market trends and challenges:
     - coordination of integration policies,
     - intersectoral cooperation,
     - voluntary relocation of refugees.
     - psychological support for those working with refugees
   - Researchers, who worked on this report have done a survey on the characteristics of the refugees - socio-demographic profiles and mobility prospects. They interviewed two groups:
     - 8 thousand refugees and migrants from Ukraine,
     - Around one thousand but only refugees from Ukraine.
   - The study found that state support is important, but most refugees rely on their own income to support themselves,
   - February and March 2023 studies revealed that only a small percentage of refugees are living in collective shelters.
   - The percentage of refugees who want to stay longer in Poland is increasing (for several years) according to the study.
   - Another part of the presentation focused on change of the trends of refugees with Ukrainian background on the Polish labor market:
     - 71% found a job in Poland, compared to the second country that received the most refugees from Ukraine - Germany, where less than 20% found a job,
     - Almost 30% of people work remotely from Ukraine,
     - Competence mismatch in the market.

4. Last part of the Working Group meeting was a discussion on topics presented by both panelists, and also a chance to share the experience among participants. The main topics of the discussion were as follow:
   - The issue of potential human trafficking of Ukrainian refugees. In Poland there was a very small number of cases, however, Prof. Kaczmarczyk noted the importance of further studies on this topic.
   - The problem of exploitation of the grey area in collective shelters, e.g. The shelter manager does not want to limit/reduce the number of refugees in collective shelter because he/she will lose funding.

- The language barrier, which prevents entry into the Polish labor market. Attendees recognized the need of joint effort to find a common standard for language classes. Nevertheless, they recognized that teaching Polish to foreigners was not common before the Ukrainian refugee crisis, and therefore it will be challenging to create a common standard for language classes.
- Nostrification of diplomas – Participants noted a pressing demand for a central system.
- During the discussion, the need for a comprehensive programme for the collective shelters, was raised in order for the refugees to become independent.
- Participants raised the topic of what they can do to combat information about stereotypes in the rental market. However, this question was left unanswered and will be further developed.

WAY FORWARD

The topics raised at the meeting were very broad and there is a need to explore them further.

NEXT MEETING

September 2023

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY

No.	Action	Responsible
1.	Preparing the next meeting of Economic Inclusion Working Group	UNHCR/IRC
2.	Preparing two more meeting with Prof. Kaczmarczyk as a panelist to further develop the findings of the study.	UNHCR